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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

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Yugoslav Defense Minister Arrives In Moscow

Defense Minister Ljubicic arrived in Moscow on 24 August for what is billed as a "holiday." There was no previous announcement of the trip, nor does the press coverage of his arrival indicate how long he will stay. Ljubicic met with Soviet Defense Minister Grechko shortly after arriving for talks which were described as passing in an atmosphere of "friendship and mutual understanding."

Despite the apparent suddenness of the trip and the lack of publicity preceeding it, the visit appears to be routine. Most likely, Ljubicic is repaying Grechko's visit to Yugoslavia in late March and early April.

Ljubicic last visited the Soviet Union in May 1970. At that time, he was shopping for Soviet arms. The possibility cannot be ruled out that some talk of Yugoslav purchases of Soviet arms will take place this time -- particularly in view of the fact that Belgrade is known to have approached Paris recently on the possibility of buying French arms.

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Today Eastern Europe, Tomorrow the World?

On 24 August, a Chinese IL-62 arrived in Tirana following a probable stopover in Bucharest. The flight appears to be a test run preliminary to inaugurating regularly scheduled service to Eastern Europe.

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China's entry into intercontinental air service will connect Peking with Bucharest and Tirana, the

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capitals of China's closest friends in Eastern Europe, while inclusion of Belgrade as a point on the route suggests developing ties with Yugoslavia. Other stops in Pakistan and Iran will flesh out the route.

Chinese acquisition of Soviet IL-62's and negotiations with Boeing for 707's indicate that a twice-weekly service from China to Eastern Europe is imminent. China reportedly has at least two IL-62's that are capable of transporting 189 passengers 5000 miles. Two of these four engine craft are sufficient for immediate bi-weekly service to Eastern Europe and contracts have been delivered for a minimum of three additional planes that will presumably be employed to expand service to other communist countries with a direct route to Moscow. No service to Western Europe or beyond has yet been determined, but informed observers speculate that the PRC will either extend its routes "westward" or add separate links to cities in Western Europe and Africa.

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